

# THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY  
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS  
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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**IRAQ WAR REACTION: PART 2**  
**PUBLIC DIVIDED ABOUT THE MERITS OF**  
**PEACE MARCHES. BIG DIFFERENCES IN THE**  
**FEELINGS OF SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS**  
**ABOUT THE WAR. U.S. MEDIA SEEN AS DOING**  
**A GOOD JOB IN ITS COVERAGE.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

While a large majority (76%) of Californians classify themselves as supporters of the Iraqi war and just 21% are opposed, they are more divided when it comes to the merits of peace demonstrations in times of war and whether those who participate in such rallies are being unpatriotic.

In addition, supporters and opponents have very different personal feelings about the war. Those who support the war are much more likely than opponents to say they feel “hopeful,” “confident” and “proud.” On the other hand, the war’s opponents are more inclined to say they feel “angry,” “stressed” and “fearful.”

The U. S. media’s coverage of the war is being received very favorably by Californians. The practice of having reporters travel with coalition forces in Iraq and submitting dispatches from combat areas is strongly endorsed.

These findings come from a *Field Poll* survey of California residents completed Sunday.

### **View of protest marches**

The California public is about evenly split – 48% saying it is a bad thing and 43% believing it is a good thing – for American citizens who oppose the Iraq war to be holding protest marches and rallies.

A small majority of Democrats – 53% to 41% – thinks the peace marches and rallies are a good thing. However, a larger majority of Republicans takes the opposite view, with 58% saying they are a bad thing and just 32% calling them a good thing. Non-partisans and others are evenly divided on the issue.

In the San Francisco Bay Area 52% feel the protest marches are a good thing, while 38% say they are bad. Residents of Los Angeles County are evenly divided on the merits of these demonstrations. This

contrasts with the views of residents of Northern California outside the Bay Area, and those living in Southern California outside of Los Angeles County, majorities of whom view the peace marches negatively.

A majority of war supporters (58%) believes the peace marches and rallies are a bad thing for the country, while 33% see them in a positive light. Among those opposed to the war, almost four in five (78%) believe their actions are beneficial.

	<u>Bad thing</u>	<u>Good thing</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	48%	43	9
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	41%	53	6
Republicans	58%	32	10
Non-partisans/others*	39%	41	20
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	44%	47	9
Other Southern California	52%	35	13
San Francisco Bay Area	38%	52	10
Other Northern California*	56%	39	5
<u>Position on the war</u>			
Support	58%	33	9
Oppose	14%	78	8

\* Relatively small sample bases.

### **Patriotic or unpatriotic?**

By a small margin – 47% to 39% – Californians feel that most Americans who participate in peace demonstrations in a time of war are being unpatriotic rather than patriotic.

This view is particularly prominent among Republicans who hold this view by a 64% to 25% margin. On the other hand, Democrats - by a 53% to 35% margin - see these activists as being patriots. There is an even distribution of sentiment on this issue among non-partisans and others.

More residents of the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County feel that it is an act of patriotism when someone participates in peace demonstrations. However, many more people outside of the state's large metropolitan areas tend to believe that the protesters are being unpatriotic.

Of those who oppose the war, three-fourths (75%) feel that peace demonstrators are patriotic. War supporters take an almost opposite view, with 58% saying that the demonstrators are unpatriotic and just 30% feeling they are patriotic.

**Table 2**  
**Are most Americans who participate in peace demonstrations  
 being patriotic or unpatriotic?**

	<u>Unpatriotic</u>	<u>Patriotic</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	47%	39	14
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	35%	53	12
Republicans	64%	25	11
Non-partisans/others*	33%	34	33
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	38%	52	10
Other Southern California	49%	31	20
San Francisco Bay Area	42%	46	12
Other Northern California*	64%	27	9
<u>Position on the war</u>			
Support	58%	30	12
Oppose	13%	75	12

\* Relatively small sample bases.

**Presidential candidates speaking out against the war**

The tendency of Californians to take a dim view of people speaking out against the war carries over to the Democratic presidential candidates who oppose the war. More than half (53%) of the public thinks it is a bad thing for those presidential candidates to be voicing their opposition to the war at this time. This increases to 64% among supporters of the war.

Views on this issue are highly partisan. Among Democrats, a 52% to 39% majority thinks it is a good thing for candidates who oppose the war to be making their views known now. On the other hand, by a 74% to 15% margin Republicans say it is a bad thing for the Democratic presidential candidates to be doing this at this time. A slight plurality of non-partisans sides with the Democratic position and feel it is a good thing for anti-war candidates to be speaking out.

Residents of Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area are evenly divided on this issue, while those living in other parts of the state oppose open dissent among the presidential candidates opposed to the war.

**Table 3**  
**Good thing or bad thing for Democratic presidential candidates  
 who oppose the war to be making their views known now**

	<u>Bad thing</u>	<u>Good thing</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	53%	36	11
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	39%	52	9
Republicans	74%	15	11
Non-partisans/others*	38%	45	17
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	44%	45	11
Other Southern California	61%	31	8
San Francisco Bay Area	44%	43	13
Other Northern California*	65%	24	11
<u>Position on the war</u>			
Support	64%	26	10
Oppose	18%	73	9

\* Relatively small sample bases.

**Big differences in personal feelings about the war**

War supporters express an entirely different set of personal feelings about the war than those who are opposed.

When asked to describe their personal feelings about the Iraq war 84% of supporters say that “hopeful” is a term that applies to them, while only 34% of the war’s opponents feel this way.

Eight in ten (81%) war supporters but only 14% of opponents say they feel “confident” about the war.

Two-thirds (67%) of those backing the war say they feel “proud,” while very few of the war’s opponents feel this way (6%).

Of those opposed to the war, 70% say they feel “angry” about it, compared to just 20% of war supporters.

Among the war’s opponents, 57% report being “stressed” by the war and 46% say they are “depressed.” This compares to 36% of war supporters who are “stressed” and 18% who are “depressed.”

In addition, 54% of opponents say they are “fearful” compared to just 37% of supporters.

**Table 4**  
**Personal feelings of Californians about the Iraq war**

	<u>Describes my feelings</u>	<u>Doesn't describe</u>
Hopeful	<u>73%</u>	<u>27</u>
Support the war	84%	16
Oppose the war	34%	66
Confident	<u>65%</u>	<u>35</u>
Support the war	81%	19
Oppose the war	14%	86
Proud	<u>53%</u>	<u>47</u>
Support the war	67%	33
Oppose the war	6%	94
Stressed	<u>42%</u>	<u>58</u>
Support the war	36%	64
Oppose the war	57%	43
Fearful	<u>41%</u>	<u>59</u>
Support the war	37%	63
Oppose the war	54%	46
Angry	<u>31%</u>	<u>69</u>
Support the war	20%	80
Oppose the war	70%	30
Depressed	<u>25%</u>	<u>75</u>
Support the war	18%	82
Oppose the war	46%	54

**Job the media is doing**

Californians take a very positive view of the job that the U. S. media is doing in covering the Iraq war. Six in ten say the media is doing either an excellent (28%) or good (33%) job in the way it is reporting events from that country.

How a person feels about the war is related to their appraisal of the media's war coverage. Almost seven in ten (68%) war supporters have a favorable view of the overall job being done by the U.S. media, compared to only 38% of war opponents who feel this way.

**Table 5**  
**Job the U.S. news media is doing in covering the Iraq war**

	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>Position on the war</u>	
		<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Excellent	28%	32%	14%
Good	33	36	24
Fair	25	21	34
Poor	12	9	23
No opinion	2	2	5

**Slant of the U.S. media coverage**

About one half (51%) of the statewide public thinks U.S. media coverage of the war is balanced. Among the rest, there is the tendency to feel that the reporting is more pro-war (33%) than anti-war (11%).

Those who oppose the war are less likely to view the coverage as balanced. A majority (57%) of this group views the reporting as being more pro-war, while 35% say it is balanced and 5% feel it is more anti-war.

**Table 6**  
**Slant of U.S. news coverage of the Iraq war**

<u>Reporting has been...</u>	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>Position on the war</u>	
		<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Balanced	51%	56%	35%
More pro-war	33	27	57
More anti-war	11	12	5
No opinion	5	5	3

**Slant of Arab media coverage**

In contrast to their feelings about U. S. media coverage, most Californians think there is an anti-war slant in Arab media coverage, with 51% describing their coverage as anti-war, 14% balanced and 11% pro-war. A relatively large proportion (24%) does not have an opinion of the Arab media coverage of the war.

<b>Table 7</b>			
<b>Slant of Arab news coverage of the Iraq war</b>			
	<u>Statewide</u>	<b>Position on the war</b>	
		<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
<u>Reporting has been...</u>			
Balanced	14%	16%	8%
More pro-war	11	11	13
More anti-war	51	53	48
No opinion	24	20	31

**Embedded reporters**

A major innovation in the way the media is covering the war is that more than six hundred news people are attached to the different military units and reporting events from those vantage points. Supporters and opponents of the war think almost alike on this matter, believing that it is a good thing to have reporters travel with the coalition forces and submitting dispatches from combat areas.

<b>Table 8</b>			
<b>Opinion of having reporters traveling with coalition forces in Iraq and submitting dispatches from combat areas</b>			
	<u>Statewide</u>	<b>Position on the war</b>	
		<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Good thing	59%	60%	57%
Bad thing	32	33	24
No opinion	9	7	19

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The results in this report are based on a statewide telephone survey conducted April 1-6, 2003 among a representative sample of 1,006 California adults in English and Spanish. Interviewing was divided into two approximately equal sized matching subsamples across the six days of interviewing, with 502 interviews completed in the first three days and 504 interviews completed in the last three days. All questions from the current report were asked of the random subsample of 504 California adults. Subgroups from this sample have the following bases: Democrats (232), Republicans (206), non-partisan/others (66), Los Angeles County (140), other Southern California (170), San Francisco Bay Area (106), other Northern California (88), war supporters (380), war opponents (108).

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the sample would have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points, while sampling error from subgroups would be larger.

There are many possible sources of error in any survey other than sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sequencing or through undetected errors or omissions in sampling, interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such errors.

### **Questions Asked**

Which of the following describes your own personal feelings about the war (ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER). Does this describe your feelings or not?

In general, how would you rate the job the major news organizations in this country are doing in covering the war in Iraq – excellent, good, fair or poor?

Do you think U.S. news coverage of the war in Iraq has generally been more pro-war, more anti-war or has it generally been balanced?

Do you think news coverage in Arab countries of the war in Iraq has generally been more pro-war, more anti war or has it generally been balanced?

Television and newspaper reporters are traveling with the coalition forces in Iraq and submitting dispatches from combat areas. Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing that reporters are doing this?

Do you think it is a good thing or bad thing for the Democratic presidential candidates who oppose the war to be making their views about the war known now?

Do you think that most of the Americans who participate in peace demonstrations or peace rallies are being patriotic or unpatriotic?

Do you think it is a good thing or bad thing for the average Americans who oppose the war to be making their views about the war known now?